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Chicago-area political leaders are turning up the heat to try to stop BP's plan to dump thousands of pounds of pollutants into Lake Michigan, the source of much of the area's drinking water.

Republican U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk of Highland Park said Indiana environmental regulators made a "horrible" error in granting BP a permit to unload 54 percent more ammonia and 35 percent more toxic sludge into the lake every day from its Whiting, Ind., refinery. And Kirk called on BP to back off its plan, especially in light of the company's ads that tout it as environmentally friendly.

"I think BP now stands for bad polluter," said Kirk, who took reporters on a four-hour boat tour to the British Petroleum refinery across the lake. "They need to be called out on their corporate hypocrisy."

BP said its \$3.8 billion refinery expansion will generate 80 new jobs and allow it to make gas from Canadian oil, helping alleviate the United States' dependence on Middle Eastern oil.

"BP has no intention of doing anything that would damage Lake Michigan," BP spokesman Scott Dean said. "We received a permit ... that merely set some new limits. We believe we can operate well under the permitted levels."

While BP will meet federal requirements, Indiana's permission also marks the first time in a decade new dumping has been allowed into the lake, according to Kirk.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Rahm Emanuel of Chicago, Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Springfield and Daley administration officials will hold a news conference today urging people in the city and suburbs to sign a petition opposing BP's dumping plan.

Kirk has a petition up at kirkforcongress.com for people to print and sign.

On Tuesday, the House is expected to approve a resolution strongly opposing BP. Kirk said he hopes that symbolic show of strength will lead his legislation to ban all dumping into the lake to get more support.

While the 1970s federal Clean Air Act cut the level of lake dumping, companies are still permitted to release regulated amounts of pollutants into the lake. Kirk said his legislation was aimed at Milwaukee and Detroit, which allow much of the lake pollutants, but now also has BP and Indiana in its sights.

BP isn't scheduled to start the increased ammonia and sludge dumping until 2011, so federal lawmakers have some time to try to block it.